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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

EASTERN RUGS AT JOSEPH WILD & CO'S.



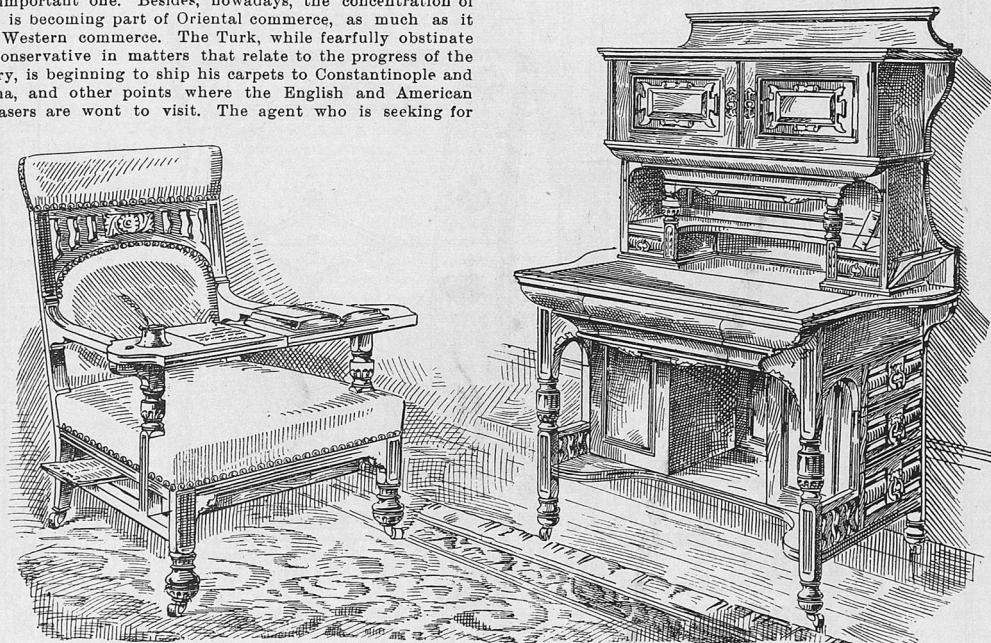
R. JAMES N. EDGAR, manager of the rug department, Messrs. Joseph Wild & Co's. of Worth Street, New York, has just returned after a three months' trip to Constantinople and the East in search of rare and curious fabrics that form so large a part of Oriental life and religion.

"I did not go further than Constantinople, Smyrna, and one or two points in Turkey and Asia," said Mr. Edgar, in reply to a question. "I have been all over Persia, not to speak of my journeys to India in search of rare antique rugs, and no one who has undergone the experience of traveling for months on horseback, and sleeping on the damp floor of the ordinary Turkish or Persian khan, with the attendant discomforts so well known to travelers, is not over anxious to go over the same ground again, unless the object in view is a very important one. Besides, nowadays, the concentration of goods is becoming part of Oriental commerce, as much as it is of Western commerce. The Turk, while fearfully obstinate and conservative in matters that relate to the progress of the country, is beginning to ship his carpets to Constantinople and Smyrna, and other points where the English and American purchasers are wont to visit. The agent who is seeking for

undoubtedly under the belief that she had secured a great bargain. Not being accustomed to the methods of Eastern dealers, who first ask ten times more for an article than it is really worth, she had unwittingly allowed herself to be swindled. Tourists of this kind are making it more and more difficult for dealers to buy goods at reasonable prices, hence it is necessary for the agent to make frequent excursions to Daghestan, or the region of the Caucasian mountains, which are inhabited by Turks, Armenians, Turcomans and Kurds, the two latter being nomad races, to pick up good rugs. The finest rugs made by these people are called Daghestan, which is the generic name given in that country to all close-woven, heavy, fine wool rugs, which are naturally made in a region where the majority of the people are shepherds, rearing flocks of fine woolled sheep."

"Are all the rugs made in the mountain regions of Turkey and Asia known as Daghestan rugs?"

"Well, to be more exact," said Mr. Edgar, "the term Daghestan is applied by the trade to the finest quality of Caucasus rugs, which are oblong in shape. Kazak is the name applied



LIBRARY FURNITURE—READING EASY CHAIR AND ESCRITOIRE, MADE BY W. BAILEY & SON, LONDON.

bargains, however, has to pay for the convenience thus afforded him in the way of traveling, in the greater price that is put upon the goods in the bazaars. There was a time when the Turks didn't know the value of their rugs, but in these days of the ubiquitous tourist he has discovered a fortune in an old rug, and the foolish way in which tourists allow themselves to be cheated in the matter of rugs makes it difficult for the representative of a business house to get goods at low figure, unless he buys in large quantities. To give you an illustration of this, there sat beside me one morning at breakfast in the Hotel at Constantinople a wealthy American lady who told me that she had bought an antique Ghiordes rug for 150 pounds. I told her that I was very much interested in rugs and asked her permission to see the rug in question. As soon as I saw the rug I said to her, 'Madam, I can sell you a duplicate of that rug in New York, duty paid, for 125 dollars, or 25 pounds.' The lady was naturally surprised at my statement, for she was

to rugs coming from the higher mountain regions, which are made of heavy short wool. They are wider, as compared with the Daghestan rugs. The Anatolian is the Turkish prayer rug. It has a very soft nap, and comes in bright colors arranged in Turk's taste. Antique Anatolian rugs have a most brilliant gloss, and the antique Daghestan and Kazak rugs have a beautiful soft sheen, which, like the gloss of the Anatolian rugs, comes from long continued friction while in use as a prayer rug or floor cover. This gloss is so delicate and so different from any artificial lustre, that it gives to good quality antique rugs a well merited value."

"The Turks, of course, make all their rugs by hand, and not by machinery?"

"Yes, all their rugs are hand made on the family looms of the people. Every girl in the country prepares a number of fine rugs for her dower before she is sixteen or eighteen years of age. What are known as 'royal antique' rugs are made by

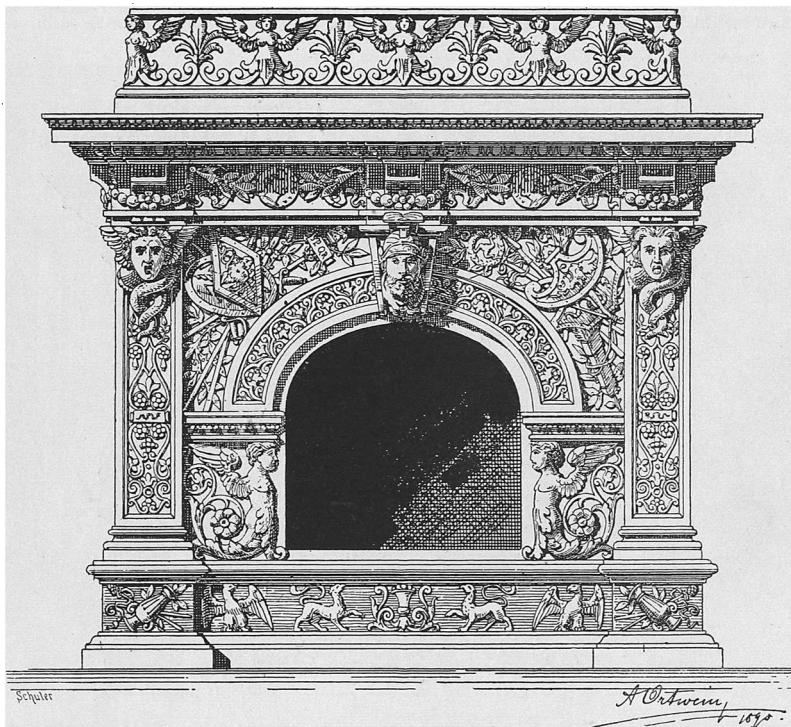
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the earlier Princesses of the various khans of the country in accordance with the customs of the people and as a royal recreation. The modern Princesses of the East seek a less laborious recreation by investing in the luxuries of the Western world. The finest Daghestan, Kazak and Anatolian rugs were woven centuries ago by the leading families in the country, and being carefully used by succeeding generations as family relics, are handed down to the present owners who dispose of them, generally by reason of want, and in some cases as a favor to the native buyers. In all likelihood generations will yet elapse before the Turks will make rugs by machinery. The Turkish government, as well as the people themselves, are obstinately conservative, and are fanatically opposed to changes of any kind. The Sultan refused to allow Constantinople to be lighted by electricity, and the Turkish government have refused the request of wealthy citizens of Smyrna to build factories for the manufacture of rugs, on the ground that it would

From an artistic standpoint the real rug is well nigh perfect as far as coloring and design are concerned. The wool used is colored by fast vegetable dyes, the preparation of the pigments being secrets in the families of the weavers. The patterns have descended from generation to generation, and are in accordance with the canons of the highest forms of modern decorative art."

"These reasons, then, make the Oriental rug valuable socially, financially and sentimentally?"

"The Eastern rug," said Mr. Edgar, "is even more than what I have told you of it. In Oriental life, religion enters to an extent not realized by the people of Western countries. The rug being one of the characteristic productions of the Orient, it naturally follows that it must in some way or other reflect the dominant spirit of the people, and this is so. In the prayer of the Moslem centre various sacred ideas. He bows down before his Maker and the material upon which he rests his



MARBLE MANTEL-PIECE IN THE EMPEROR'S APARTMENT OF THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA'S VILLA AT CORFU.

be taking away the labor of the people to make rugs by machinery."

"How can a person tell a genuine Oriental rug?"

"Simply by learning to distinguish its characteristics. An eye that is once accustomed to recognize the peculiar Oriental character in a rug, and understand the mystic language it seems to speak can make no mistake, and is not likely to be imposed upon. Each particular tuft of yarn has to be tied in a knot by the fingers of the artist weaver, so that a medium sized rug requires the labor of months or years to complete it. The peculiar charm and characteristic of the antique rug is its perfect naturalness; the soft, yet deep colors, the strength of texture, and the charming irregularity of the design, suggests the beauty of natural scenery, and are equally unmistakable. No imitations are offered of Oriental rugs. To imitate the color and texture of the Oriental rug would cost more than to purchase the rugs, and, as to design, the most perfect machine made imitation would at once reveal a very regular irregularity.

hands must be susceptible of spotless cleanliness. He wants to find himself in an atmosphere of high thoughts and sacred suggestions, and as he looks down in kneeling, he sees the living green and crimson—symbols of life and power—mingled in mystic symbols of blue and gold that carry to him faint ideas of love and glory. At home in the rooms where the morning sun looks in, the pious Turk finds in his prayer rug the associations of the mosque in his native city or of the holiest of holies where he prayed in his pilgrimage to Mecca, in the form of tombs and panels and designs of encaustic tiles and peculiar arrangements of stone and brick in the walls; so that wherever the worshipping Turk may be found kneeling upon the prayer rug against the Eastern sky, the soul finds itself in the midst of sacred associations, breathes the holy atmosphere of the mosque where it has prayed with the faithful. Thus dignified the Oriental rug has become a great institution. Among the people of the Orient, both Moslem and Christian, industry and talent have been devoted to it for centuries. By reason of

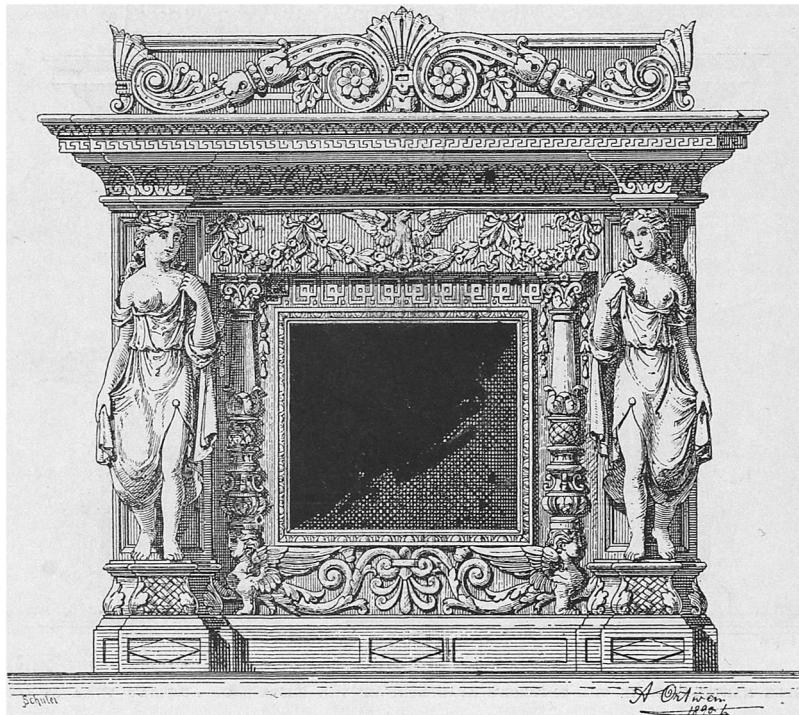
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the high value thus put upon a good rug the mothers and daughters of the people, who address themselves to the arduous task of "tying up" a rug, spare no pains in procuring the best materials, and their zeal develops the highest talent. In many cases these rugs are made as votive offerings to mosques and shrines, and then nothing is to be spared. Ruskin's lamp of sacrifice was there in all its brightness. The rug is a gift to God, and must be costly; the finest wool, the best dyes, and the highest talent are put upon the altar; and some of these old Kazak and Daghestan rugs that are found in the Turkish mosques or shrines are splendid works of art, with an exuberance of rich, soft coloring and bold design that delight the eye and call forth the admiration of appreciative minds."

A NEW idea for decorating the tops of tables, or wood panels is to arrange fern leaves on the wood so as to form a design, and fasten them slightly here and there with gum, just enough to prevent them from being shifted. Fine pins or needles may also be used for this purpose. After the pattern is

which it resembles, having the advantage of being less laborious and less expensive. Charming effects may be obtained by giving the fern leaves different shades; this is done by removing some of the leaves before the background is completely darkened, and letting them take a light tinge of brown from the spray. In this way one may produce two or three different degrees or shades. Ivy leaves are also very effective; in fact everything in that line may serve, as well as conventional designs cut out in paper and fastened on the wood. The great point is to get the spray as fine as dust, and to cover the wood very evenly. The work is called "Spritz-arbeit."

THE use of seeds for purposes of simple ornamentation is very old, and has been of late revived with good effect for embroidering fancy articles. The best seeds are those of the melon, vegetable marrow and cucumber, assorted according to size, shape and color. After the design has been traced on the material, which may be velvet, plush, cloth or silk, the stalks are put in with gold or maize colored silk in stem, chain or herring-bone stitch, and the leaves outlined in a similar man-



MARBLE MANTEL-PIECE IN THE EMPRESS'S APARTMENT IN THE EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA'S VILLA AT CORFU.

arranged prepare some very liquid water-color (sepia is mostly used) and by means of a hard tooth or nail brush dipped in the liquid color, try to produce the finest possible spray by rubbing the said brush against another dry one. Cover the whole surface with the spray until those parts of the wood that are not covered with the ferns appear quite dark brown. Then remove the pattern and complete the leaves by painting in some veins, etc., where it is necessary. Any color may be chosen for this work, but brown is the prettiest. In order to obtain a richer brown, burnt umber may be mixed with the sepia. Great care must be taken to obtain a fine spray, as any heavy drop of color would spoil the background, and it is best to try first on a piece of cardboard. There are inexpensive machines to be had for doing this kind of work, which is quite as interesting and beautiful as the now fashionable poker work

ner. Then the seeds are placed in position and fixed by a stitch, at either end, care being taken to make them lie flat. Among the flowers which can be imitated in seed work are marguerites, asters, starwort, jessamine, etc. Ears of corn or barley are very effective, though more difficult to work, owing to the seeds having to be packed close together. On a foundation of maroon velvet, or crimson cloth the seeds stand out like ivory in bold relief. The calyx of the buds is done in crewel work or silk. This work can be adapted to fancy articles of various kinds, such as table borders and centres, banner screens, tea cosies, etc.

A NOVEL stationary cabinet has the writing-pad in the center, with two firm pockets for paper and envelopes, one at each end.